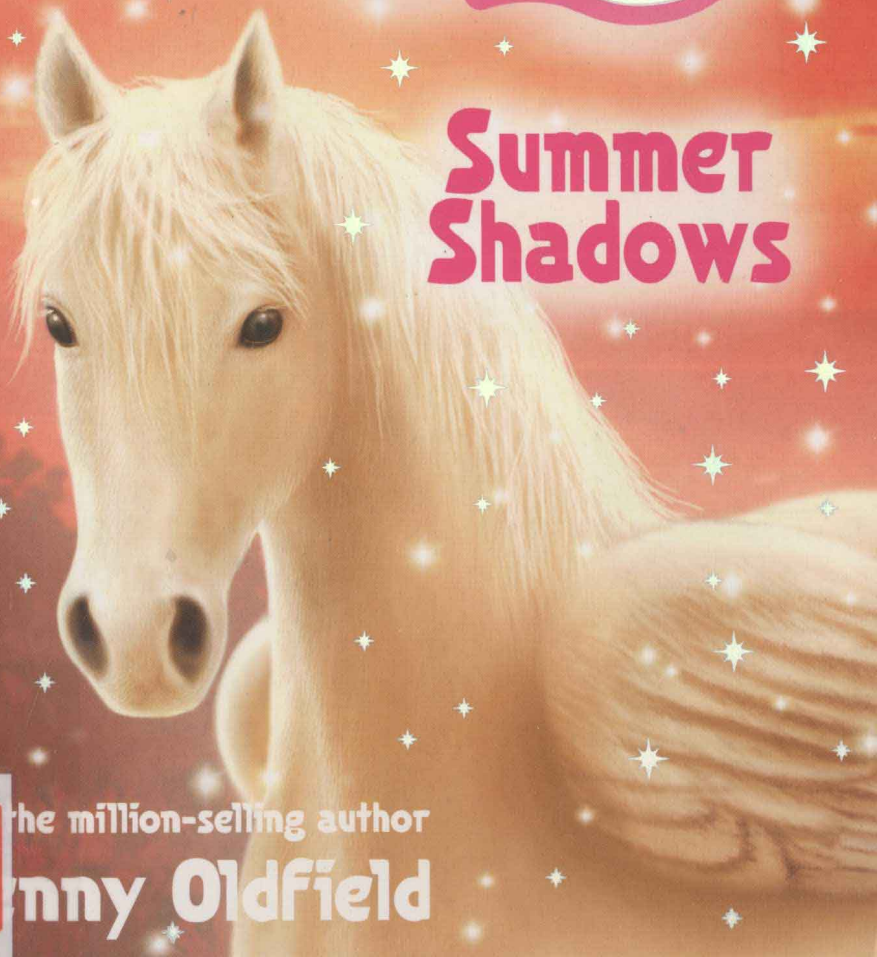


My Magical Pony

Summer
Shadows



the million-selling author
Tony Oldfield

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*My
Magical
Pony*

Summer Shadows

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My Magical Pony

Summer Shadows

By Jenny Oldfield

Illustrated by Alasdair Bright



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First published in Great Britain in 2006
by Hodder Children's Books

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A Catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-13: 9780340910771

Printed in the UK by CPI Bookmarque, Croydon, CR0 4TD

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Hodder Children's Books
A division of Hachette Children's Books
338 Euston Road, London NW1 3BH





Chapter One

Krista stood in a sunny field full of ponies. They trotted towards her, swishing their tails.

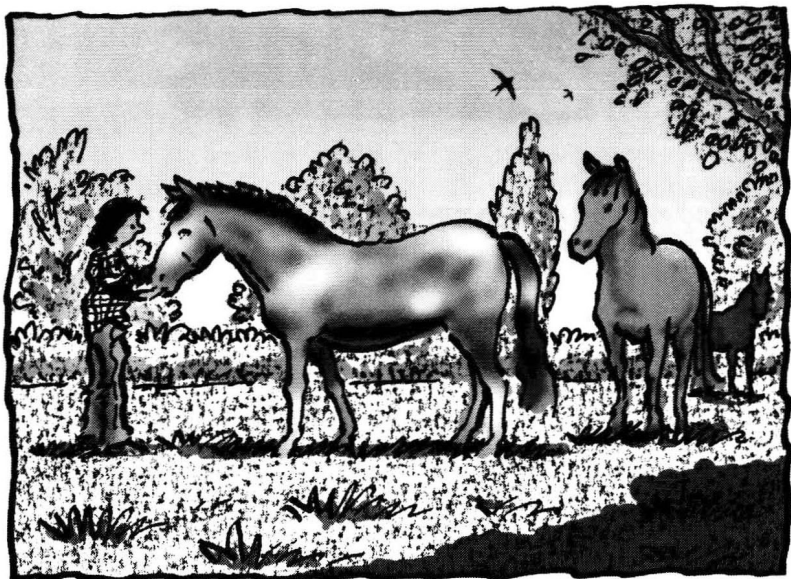
"Hi, Comanche!" she grinned. "Hi, Misty. Hi, Shandy."

Comanche came up and nuzzled her hand.

"Hey, I don't have any treats for you!" She laughed as the friendly pony's soft, pink nose searched in her pockets for an apple or a piece of carrot.

In the far corner of the field, Drifter kept his distance.

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Krista fastened a head collar around Comanche's head and led him towards the gate. "You're a good boy," she told him. He was always pleased to see her, always ready to come into the stable yard and be saddled up.

Comanche plodded steadily behind Krista into the yard, where they found Jo Weston,

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the owner of Hartfell Stables.

"It's half past eight," Jo pointed out.

"We need to get a move on to be ready for the first trek at nine."

So Krista left Comanche with Jo and ran back to the field to fetch Misty. "Good girl," she told the grey, trotting her quickly out of the field into the yard then dashing back for Shandy.

"We're going to be busy," she said, parting the dark bay pony's thick mane and buckling the head collar. "Today's the first day of the school summer holidays – yippee!"

Back in the yard Jo had already tacked up Comanche and Misty.

"Shall I fetch Drifter?" Krista asked.

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"Yes, quick as you can, please," Jo said, disappearing into the tack room to fetch a third saddle.

Krista ran back eagerly to the field. Drifter was a young chestnut pony who had only been at Hartfell for a few months. He was high-spirited and beautiful, with his glossy brown coat and white star between his gorgeous brown eyes. "Here, Drifter!" Krista called from the gate.

The pony tossed his head and began to gallop towards her. His long mane streamed back from his face, his hooves kicked up small chunks of earth.

"Whoa!" Krista said as he drew near.

Drifter stopped ten metres from where



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she stood. He waited for her to walk to within arm's length, then suddenly ducked his head and trotted off.

"Come here, boy!" she called again.

He cocked his head to one side as if to say, *Come and get me!*

"OK," Krista told him, advancing steadily, head collar in hand. "Stand!" she said firmly.

Drifter tossed his head again. *No way!* And he was gone, cantering across the empty field, flicking his tail. He knew that Krista could only stand and watch as he took refuge from the sun in the shade of an old chestnut tree.

Krista shook her head. He was a lovely pony, but even she had to admit he could be a handful. *It's because he's so clever,* she reminded herself.

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When he sees me with the head collar he knows he has to do some work. That's why he runs away!

"OK, if that's the way you want to play it!" she called, pretending to close the gate and walk off without him.

Drifter watched with his head still to one side. *What's she up to?*

"Stay there by yourself if you want!" she called over her shoulder. "See if I care!"

Hub? She's leaving me in the field all by myself. I don't like this! Anxiously,



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the chestnut trotted to the gate.

"Hah, so you don't want to be left behind after all!" Krista grinned, quickly slipping the collar over the mischievous pony's head.

"I know your game, you little monkey!"

Drifter nuzzled her arm as if to say sorry. And when they arrived in the yard he stood patiently as Jo saddled him and told Krista that she would be leading the ride on the little chestnut.

"Cool!" Krista ran for her hard hat and riding crop.

"Follow the cliff path around Whitton Bay," Jo instructed. "Mark will be riding Shandy and I've saddled Comanche for Carrie. Janey will be on Misty."

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Krista nodded at the three young riders who had just been dropped off at the yard. She knew Mark Liddell and Carrie Jordan from school, but she'd never met the other girl before. "Hi, I'm Krista," she said.

"I'm Janey Bellwood. I'm new."

"Janey's ridden before," Jo explained.

"So there shouldn't be any problems."

"I used to have a pony of my own," the girl said proudly.

Krista smiled and nodded. This was going to be fun!

"Ready, everyone?" Jo asked.

Mark, Carrie and Janey nodded.

"Let's go!" Krista called, heading Drifter out through the gate, up the lane, and along

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the narrow track that overlooked the spectacular golden bay.

"I led the ride!" Krista told Spike when she got home that evening. She was lying on her back staring up at the cloudless blue sky.

Spike the hedgehog drank milk from his saucer in the back garden of High Point Farm.

"I did – I led three riders!" Krista insisted. "I was on Drifter. It was cool!"

Slurp-slurp! Spike guzzled happily.



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"OK, so it's nothing to you," she admitted. "But it was a big deal for me. We rode along the cliff path, past the magic spot ..."

Slurp! Spike finished off the milk.

"... Where Shining Star usually appears," Krista confided. "He didn't show up this morning though, 'cos we don't need him right now."

She paused to let her pet hedgehog sniff around the rim of his empty saucer, wishing that she *had* seen Star, her magical pony.

In her mind's eye she pictured him appearing in his cloud of glittering mist, with his sparkling white coat that gave off a silver glow.

Rolling over on to her hands and knees,

